

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 49th SESSION

High-Level Segment: MENA Region Dignitaries

28 February – 3 March 2022

H.E. Mr. Kaïs Saïed - President of Tunisia

Tunisia is working to promote all human rights by cooperating with international, regional and national organizations. Tunisia had taken extraordinary measures on 25 July that some believed were means to deny certain rights. Tunisia strongly denies this, stating that all freedoms were guaranteed by the constitution and the international mechanisms ratified by the country. Tunisia seeks to achieve a society of law where every citizen is a full-fledged citizen and is working to achieve an independent judiciary.

H.E. Mr. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani - Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar

Qatar is deeply concerned over the military escalation in Ukraine and emphasizes diplomacy to resolve the crisis. Qatar stresses the principle of territorial integrity, and that highest priority is given to the protection of civilians and refugees. Qatar is providing logistical and material support to WHO and countries affected by the pandemic. The Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Second National Development Strategy 2018-2022 have been instrumental in national human rights efforts. Qatar will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup finals, which will be the first environmentally friendly and "carbon neutral" tournament. Qatar voiced concern over the humanitarian situations in Afghanistan, Palestine and Syria, stressing the need for international efforts.

H.E. Mr. Riad Al-Malki - Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine

The State of Palestine condemns Israel's continuing expansion without impunity and the human rights violations inflicted on the Palestinian people. The State of Palestine deplores Israel impeding UN officials from entering the territory and banning investigators and human rights defenders. In addition, the State of Palestine expresses concern over international companies profiting from Israel's illegal settlements and the exploitation of natural resources. The State of Palestine calls on the OHCHR to respect and fulfil Resolution 16/36 and update the database of companies involved in illegal activities in Palestine.

H.E. Mr. Faruk Kaymakcı- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs of Türkiye

Türkiye states that Russia's military offense against Ukraine is a violation of international law and remains committed to preserve Ukraine's territorial integrity, including Crimean Tatars' right to live freely in their homeland. Türkiye continues to combat intolerance and discrimination based on religion and voices concern over anti-immigration policies/pushbacks, calling for Greece and the EU to respect the right to life. Türkiye continues to host Syrians and concerning Afghanistan, encourages the Taliban to respect human rights. Türkiye stands with Palestine in guaranteeing its territorial integrity and with Libya supporting its future legitimate governments. Türkiye is engaging with all stakeholders to ensure the flow of humanitarian aid to Tigray and continues to support cooperation initiatives reinforcing the Türkiye-Armenia and Azerbaijan-Armenia processes. In addition, Türkiye calls on China to protect the rights of Uyghur-Turks and other Muslims and on the international community to recognize the rights and sovereignty of Turkish Cypriots. Türkiye wishes for a peaceful resolution of the situation in Jammu-Kashmir and expresses its concern over Myanmar's violations against the Rohingya.

H.E. Mr. Abdellatif Ouahbi - Minister of Justice of Morocco

Morocco supports the respect of sovereignty of Ukraine and believes in a peaceful settlement. To confront the consequences of the pandemic, Morocco has adopted a holistic approach. Morocco held elections in which women had broad presence. Regarding Western Sahara, Morocco affirms its adherence to the political process under the auspices of the UN to reach a realistic and sustainable political solution within the

framework of the territorial integrity of the Kingdom. Morocco presented an initiative for autonomy which credibility was confirmed by the extensive participation of the Western Sahara people in the recent elections. In addition, Morocco deplores Algeria for the inhumane conditions of detainees in Tindouf camps and the recruitment of children. Morocco is committed to defending African issues including in the areas of development, poverty and migration.

H.E. Mr. Kazem Gharibabadi - Deputy Judiciary for International Affairs and Secretary for High Council for Human Rights of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran has implemented several policies and plans in the past year to protect human rights. Iran opposes the Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) by the USA on the financial system that have hindered humanitarian activities and should be considered a crime against humanity. Iran is concerned over European States and the USA continuing to protect ringleaders from MKO terrorist group, and calls on EU, USA and HRC to prevent the free movement of MKO and bring its members to justice. Iran will hold accountable all individuals involved in the assassination of General Soleimani by the USA, and the killings of Iranian scientists by Israel and the USA. Iran supports the independent State of Palestine, condemns the injustices by Israeli forces and believes that Agenda Item 7 should be preserved until the occupation of Palestine ends. Regarding the crisis in Yemen, Iran calls for lifting the economic and humanitarian sanctions, declaring a ceasefire and launching an intra-Yemeni dialogue.

H.E. Kahtan Taha Janabi - Undersecretary for Legal Affairs and Multilateral Relations of Iraq

Iraq organised parliamentary elections in October 2021, meeting all required international standards. 97 women were elected, complementing Iraq's plan of empowering women. Iraq is working to eliminate all obstacles hindering the work of CSOs, and continuing cooperation with UNAMI, NGOs and civil society institutions. Regarding crimes committed by ISIS, Iraq has created a Survivors Law providing a legal framework to compensate victims. Iraq calls on countries to receive children of non-Iraqi origins descendent from ISIS fighters seeking to return to their country of origins. Iraq has transferred 94 Iraqi families from Syria and intensified efforts to uncover the activities of ISIS in camp al-Hol. Iraq calls on Europe to provide the necessary assistance and crackdown on human trafficking networks. In addition, Iraq has formed investigative committees to uncover violations during the 2019 demonstrations.

H.E. Mr. Faisal Mekdad - Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Syrian Arab Republic sees that western countries exploit the Council and its mechanisms to impose double standards and interfere in their internal affairs. Syria denounces the foreign occupation of part of its territory by the Turkish and USA forces and condemns the countries using "water as a weapon". Syria emphasizes that UCMs by the USA and the EU have negative repercussions on civilians' rights and on the country's recovery. Syria is determined to cleanse its territory of terrorism and foreign occupation and is moving towards national reconciliation. Syria is committed to a political process led only by Syrians and facilitated by the UN with no external interference. Syria calls on Israel to stop human rights violations and unilateral measures in the occupied Syrian Golan and supports the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent state.

H.E. Mr. Sameh Hassan Shokry Selim - Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt

Egypt has established a legal framework that ensures the right to freedom, and the president has declared the year 2022 as the year of civil society. Egypt has developed a framework to ensure its participation in COP27 and is working to protect the freedom of religion in collaboration with religious authorities. Regarding economic, social and cultural rights, resources have been allocated to provide housing and infrastructure, and to improve education and social protection programs while paying attention to people with disabilities. This has led to reduction of the economic and social impact of COVID-19, enhancement of the provision of vaccines and empowerment of women by protection against violence and sexual harassment. In addition, Egypt calls on the HRC to not to yield to politicization.

H.E. Mr. Anwar Gargash - Diplomatic Advisor to the President of the United Arab Emirates

To reinforce human rights, the UAE created an independent human rights institution (HRI), is undertaking a review of laws and adopting a National Action Plan for human rights later this year. The UAE pioneers progress on women's rights within the Arab region and is committed to mitigate risks to youth. As a host of COP28, the UAE is committed to combatting climate change. On the situation of Yemen, UAE calls on Houthis for a cease-fire and to reach a political solution. The UAE is taking serious steps to strengthen diplomatic relations with other countries in the region to reduce tension, promote a tolerance agenda and counter hateful ideologies.

H.E. Mr. Ahmad Arman - Minister of Legal Affairs and Human Rights of Yemen

As a step to emerge from war, Yemen held a dialogue on a new draft constitution and a referendum to implement its results between the communities. Yemen recalls the international community's position against the militia in 2014 was not firm enough. Yemen reiterates the need for firm measures to protect refugees and end attacks to vital energy infrastructure. Yemen denounces attacks on warehouses, while citizens have been deprived of their freedom of movement and their right to water and food. Yemen urges the HRC and international community to take responsibility and face up to the Houthi terrorism.

H.E. Ms. Wafaa Bani Mustafa - State Minister of Legal Affairs of Jordan

Jordan has set up a royal committee to modernize the political system and amend its legislation on women's rights, including protection from all forms of discrimination. Jordan passed a human trafficking act to ensure the protection of victims and their right to reparation and approved a domestic violence act imposing fines to those who do not report. Legislation now empowers women by encouraging their participation in councils, in economic life and to equal pay at work. Pending laws include topics of persons with disabilities and youth and women assuming leading roles in the political sphere. In addition, Jordan is working on amendments that propose alternative social punishments, the criminalization of harassment at the workplace and the protection of women against political violence.

H.E. Mr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Alzayani - Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain

Bahrain is working to support the efforts for peace in the region and to consolidate human values such as tolerance and peaceful coexistence. To achieve this, Bahrain established the Global Centre for Peace and Coexistence and issued a declaration for interfaith dialogue. Bahrain continues its efforts to build a society where justice, law and institutions prevail. In addition, Bahrain has addressed the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by providing citizens testing shelters and free vaccination without discrimination. Bahrain is developing a legislative system that offers alternate sentences while combating the trafficking of persons and promoting the advancement of women through national policies.

H.E. Ms. Najla Mohmad - Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Government of National Unity of Libya

Libya states that the attack against Ukraine's sovereignty highlights the need to prohibit all forms of force in resolving conflicts. Libya has organised presidential and parliamentary elections for December and democratic participation remains an essential pillar for the rule of law. Libya is working to promote the rights of migrants, punishing hate speech, enhancing the justice system and investigations on criminals. Regarding economic, social and cultural rights, Libya has raised the basic wage for the most underprivileged and is working to deliver vaccines. As a transit corridor for migrants, Libya is concerned of the consequent instability. Libya highlights the need for a collective global effort to handle criminal networks and human trafficking. In addition, Libya strongly condemns violations and aggressions against the Palestinian people and peoples in the Arab world.

H.E. Mr Hissein Brahim Taha - Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

The OIC is concerned about increased islamophobia, hate speech and racism. In terms of the Rohingya community, the OIC has taken the case to the ICJ to prevent a genocide and calls for international efforts for this process to succeed. The OIC is concerned about the rights of Kashmiri and Palestinian people, and Israel's continuing human rights violations in the OPT. The OIC calls for international cooperation to establish peace and security in the Central African Republic. On cooperation with Afghan authorities, the OIC urges the international community to provide humanitarian aid without strings attached. In addition, the OIC asks the HRC to give attention to civil, political and cultural rights and the right to development. The OIC expresses support to the empowerment of women and girls and the preservation of the family unit. At the same time, it condemns initiatives that redefine the institution of marriage and the concept of sexual orientation.

H.E. Mr. Awwad bin Saleh-Al-Awwad - President of the Saudi Human Rights Commission of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has undertaken 95 reforms that relate to human rights, including strengthening the rights of the elderly, protection of private life, combatting human trafficking, protecting the rights of children, and ensuring women's rights and their participation in social, economic and cultural life. In addition, Saudi Arabia reaffirms support to the Yemeni people whose rights have been violated by terrorist forces supported by Iran. Saudi Arabia stands with the Palestinian people and their right to create an independent State as well as with Sudan and Afghanistan to reach peace through dialogue.

H.E. Mr. Lazhar Soualem - Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations Office at Geneva
(Statement delivered in the General Segment)

Algeria seeks to enhance the independence of its judiciary system and reaffirm the effective separation of power and the promotion of democracy and freedoms through its new constitution. A constitutional court has been set up. Algeria condemns the institutionalized repression of the Palestinian people and reiterates the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination. Algeria calls on the OHCHR to dispatch observers to the occupied Sahrawi region as violations of the ceasefire and repression continue.

Right of reply:

- Türkiye (in response to the statement by Syrian Arab Republic, on the situation of Syria, and Cyprus, on Turkish Cypriots)
- Syrian Arab Republic (in response to the statement by France, Israel and Turkey, on situation in Syria)
- Iran (Islamic Republic of) (in response to the statement by Israel, on OPT)
- Algeria (2): (in response to the statement by Morocco, on Western Sahara)
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